

Music



FROM THE ARTISTS

Maria (left) and Tess Cuevas starting playing music with their grandmother's mariachi band when they each turned 11. Now with their own band, Maria the Mexican, the sisters have released an album, "Moon Colored Jade."

Ticket alert

On sale Friday

Todd Rundgren, April 3, VooDoo Lounge. \$28-\$50

The Hold Steady with Deer Tick, April 28, Granada. \$20

Reignwolf, May 6, RecordBar. \$12-\$17.90

Lisa Lampanelli, May 9, Midland. \$35



Ledisi with the Robert Glasper Experiment, May 13, Midland. \$26.50-\$46.50



Queens of the Stone Age with Primus, May 13, Starlight. \$25-\$85

Metronomy, May 23, Granada. \$15

OneRepublic, Aug. 1, Starlight. \$25-\$85

On sale Wednesday



John Legend, May 7, Kauffman Center. \$55-\$125

On the way

James Taylor, June 23, Starlight. On sale March 7; \$29.50-\$99.50

Willie Nelson and Allison Krauss & Union Station, July 6, Starlight. \$29-\$99.50

| Dan Kelly, The Star

Drawing on their roots

From mariachi to Americana soul, Maria and Tess Cuevas make their own sound.

The sisters who founded Maria the Mexican call their music a mix of Americana soul and Mexican blues, but much of its heart comes from the traditions they learned from their grandmother.

Tess and Maria Cuevas are the granddaughters of Tere-

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sa Cuevas, who died in December at 93. A native Topekan and the daughter of parents who fled Mexico during the revolution, Teresa Cue-

vas started her own all-female mariachi band, the seven-piece Mariachi Estrella, one of the first of its kind in the United States. The band was booked for a show at the Hyatt Regency on July 17, 1981, the night of the sky-walk collapse. Four band members died in the collapse. Teresa Cuevas was among the injured.

After she recovered, she kept the name Mariachi Estrella but turned her focus to

teaching mariachi music to students, including her granddaughters.

"We both joined the band when we turned 11," said Tess, a 2003 graduate of Topeka High School. "A few of our cousins did it. We did it for 12 or 13 years, into our early 20s. The height of it was during high school. We performed at a lot of wedding parties, Masses, Mexican fiestas in Topeka, Kansas City and Lawrence."

Tess played violin; Maria, who is three years younger, played vihuela, the five-string guitar that is elemental to the mariachi sound. They left Mariachi Estrella behind while in college but continued playing and performing.

"We experimented with Maria and I playing together, and she played with some blues bands," Tess said.

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